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Library & Services

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Rhode Island's state library agency, The Office of Library & Information Services, hereby replies to comments submitted in response to the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission") Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("FNPRM") regarding potential exemption of certain entities from the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act ("CALEA").¹ In the *CALEA Broadband Order*, the Commission found that it was not in the public interest at this time to extend CALEA to libraries that procure broadband Internet access through a commercial Internet Service Provider ("ISP").² We understand, therefore, that the Commission intended to exclude libraries from its definition of a telecommunications carrier and therefore CALEA's coverage. We join the comments of the American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries and Association of College and

¹ See *Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act and Broadband Access and Services*, ET Docket No. 04-295 (Rel. Sept. 23, 2005), published 70 Fed. Reg. 59,664 (Oct. 13, 2005) (" *CALEA Broadband Order*").

² *Id.* ¶ 36, n.99.

Research Libraries in asking the Commission to confirm that libraries indeed are not within the ambit of the Commission's *CALEA Broadband Order*.³

Indeed, if libraries were deemed to be telecommunications carriers because they provide, according to the Commission's definition, facilities-based, broadband Internet access to users, the potential technology and cost impact to the library community would be enormous. The Commission has no record before it to substantiate a public interest finding in regard to libraries because law enforcement has made no showing of any specific need in regard to libraries, and the Commission has not considered the cost or impact to libraries.

Also, we agree with the *ALA Comments* in that some libraries obtain broadband Internet access services via regional networks or through affiliation with regional and national high-speed networks.⁴ We understand that the commercial ISP that connects the regional network to the commercial Internet has the CALEA obligation, not the nonprofit local network that serves the libraries.

Finally, as noted in the *ALA Comments*, if libraries are not covered by the Commission's *CALEA Broadband Order*, then no express exemption is required and comment on the issue is moot.⁵ But, if the Commission intends to cover libraries or the nonprofit regional networks upon which they rely for

³ See Comments of the American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries and Association of College and Research Libraries ("ALA Comments") at 1, 4.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *ALA Comments* at 6.

Internet access, the Commission should act immediately to exempt libraries on the current record.

Respectfully submitted

RI Office of Library & Information
Services

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